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**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP  
of the  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**June 26, 2007  
Minutes**

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**THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP. AN AUDIOCASSETTE TAPE OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN SCAG'S OFFICE.**

The Meeting of the Transportation Conformity Working Group was held at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.

**In Attendance:**

Amatya, Naresh	SCAG
Ayala, Rosemary	SCAG
Bhuiyan, Shefa	Caltrans District 8
Del Rosario, Sheryll	SCAG
Dunn, Michelle	RBF Consulting
Gutierrez, Pablo	SCAG
Higgins, Kathryn	SCAQMD
Huddleston, Lori	MTA
Law, Phillip	SCAG
Lobeck, Ken	RCTC
Malisos, Achilles	RBF Consulting
Pirveysian, Zorik	SCAQMD
Sells, Eyvonne	SCAQMD
Shavit, Avital	MTA
Sherwood, Arnie	ITS UCB, SCAG
Stewart, Justus	SCAG
Torres, Eddie	RBF Consulting
Walecka, Carla	Transportation Corridor Agency
Williams, Leann	Caltrans District 7

**Via Teleconference:**

Brady, Mike	Caltrans Headquarters
Behtash, Arman	Caltrans District 12
Cacatian, Ben	Ventura County
Yoon, Andrew	Caltrans District 7
Fagan, Paul	Caltrans District 8
Gallo, Ilene	Caltrans Headquarters
H, Namat	Representing Palm Springs

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Johnson, Sandy  
Louka, Tony

Caltrans District 11  
Caltrans District 8

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

**2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There was no comment

**3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR**

**3.1 Approval Item**

**3.1 TCWG May 22, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

Eyvonne Sells, SCAQMD, questioned the context of the second paragraph of the South Coast CO Redesignation item presented by Mike Brady, Caltrans. Ben Cacatian, VCAPCD, thought it may have been something from his presentation that was inadvertently discussed here. Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, stated that staff would listen to the tape and correct the error.

Ms. Sells also pointed out some typographical errors on pages 11 and 12.

A MOTION to MOVE the minutes. MOTION was SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY approved.

**4.0 INFORMATION ITEMS**

**4.1 RTP Update**

Naresh Amatya, SCAG, stated that SCAG was releasing a Public Participation Plan. SAFETEA-LU requires SCAG to develop a Public Participation Plan in consultation with stakeholders before public outreach is done. Based on consultation with SCAG's federal partners' staff has decided to add an amendment to the existing Public Participation Plan. The

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purpose of the amendment is to provide more details on how the outreach process will be carried out in terms of the RTP and RTIP. A draft of the amendment is currently available for review. The goal is to take the amendment to the TCC to have it released for a 30-day public comment period. Mr. Amatya stated that he would like to receive comments on the amendment from members of the TCWG by July 9. In addition to the amendment there is also a survey that has been posted by SCAG on the home page of the SCAG website seeking input on the outreach strategy.

Over the last several months SCAG's focus has been to look at the RTP's system deficiencies based on 2003 model runs and 2035 baseline model runs. Major congestion points have been taken into consideration and compiled into 'Congestion Characteristics of Major Segments on Our Roadways'. The purpose of the information is to be the basis from which staff will develop alternative scenarios. Baseline revenue and baseline cost issues were covered at the last TAC meeting. Based on preliminary estimates, revenue of approximately \$237 billion in 2007 dollars will be generated during the plan period, with a horizon of 2035. The total cost comes out to around the same as the total revenue. This does not allow for additional funding unless new revenue sources are created. These potential revenue sources are being considered. Growth scenarios were also discussed at the TAC meeting. Opportunities in terms of potentially densifying transit corridors, densifying the transit oriented development, and linking centers were discussed. Framework for developing the growth scenarios has been discussed. The next step is to actually develop the scenarios which are scheduled for completion in the next few months. The goal is to release a draft of the plan by October which gives SCAG a bit more time than is traditionally given for refining the draft prior to final adoption early next year.

SCAG's amendments, Amendment #3 for the RTP and Amendment #8 for the RTIP, were created primarily to ensure consistency between the CMIA projects and SCAG's plans and programs. SCAG adopted the amendments as scheduled in May and submitted them to the federal agencies. The Feds are reviewing it and close to issuing a letter to SCAG on the RTP amendment. It is critical that staff receive the letter from the federal agencies before July 1.

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4.2    Public Participation Plan Amendment

Rosemary Ayala, SCAG, highlighted the key discussions with Commissions and the feedback she had received from them regarding the RTIP portion of the Public Participation Plan. The most important topic discussed was the public hearing requirement for amendments. There are four types of amendments: 1) administrative, 2) formal – changes that do not impact the existing conformity determination; 3) formal - relying on existing conformity determination; and 4) formal – new conformity determination required. SAFETEA-LU currently does not require a 30-day public review, so FHWA has stated that as long as it is reasonable, we could change the number of days. In meeting with the Commissions and IVAG, it was proposed that the comment period for formal amendments that rely on existing conformity determination would be 15 days; all other formal amendments would be 30 days.

Also discussed was the public hearings process. Unfortunately, we traditionally do not receive much in the way of comments or attendance at our public hearings. It was suggested that staff hold three in the region. SCAG is trying to improve the number of attendants to the public hearings by providing video conferencing at the Riverside SCAG office and at another in the northern part of the SCAG region.

Ms. Ayala further described the contents of the document. Staff would like to receive initial comments from the TCWG by July 9<sup>th</sup>. Then there will be a 45-day public review period for any additional comments.

Ilene Gallo, Caltrans, questioned the rationale of a 15 day comment period. Ms. Ayala replied that such projects could be delivered two weeks sooner. It was noted that amendments would have already gone through an approval phase from the Commissions via project sponsors before coming to SCAG. Again, the 15 day review period is primarily for projects relying on existing conformity determinations. Further, we usually do not receive any comments from the public during the 30 days, but rather get comments from project sponsors and those are usually few and far between. Most comments come from Caltrans and federal programming or agencies in their approval process. Nevertheless, we will take your comment into consideration.

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Arnie Sherwood, ITS UCB, SCAG, stated that since we a different than other parts of the state in that we have Commissions, it may be useful to indicate in the table that the amendments go through public review through the Commissions before they come to SCAG.

**4.3     2008 RTIP Guidelines**

Rosemary Ayala, SCAG, discussed the development of 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Guidelines. Comments on the conformity section of the RTIP Guidelines were received from FHWA, RCTC, and Metro and will be incorporated into the Guidelines as appropriate. The document is expected to be sent out electronically by mid-July. The item will be taken to the September meeting of the Transportation Communication Committee and the October meeting of the Regional Council. The County Transportation Commissions agreed to this schedule as long as they had a draft before them that would allow them to start work on developing their programs.

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, discussed the proposal to include in the RTIP Guidelines types of projects that would be assumed to not require modeling. It would be helpful to have criteria in the guidelines that removes the ambiguity for certain projects on whether or not they need to be modeled. Ken Lobeck, RCTC, explained the difficulties project sponsors have in regard to these issues. If we do not provide the details sufficiently and accurately to SCAG, then it doesn't get modeled correctly and the project gets stopped since we cannot get an environmental sign-off.

One consideration is that auxiliary lanes, or additions to auxiliary lanes, would only require modeling if they connect two exits or on-ramps, or are greater than one mile in length. Mike Brady, Caltrans, stated there have been continual discussions with the federal agencies regarding this. If the federal agencies are not ready to accept this as an exemption, there is the potential for categorical conformity. In response to a question, Mr. Brady attempted to clarify for the Working Group what categorical conformity is in SAFETEA-LU. He stated that it is not well defined in the law. It seems to be a situation where USDOT can effectively add to the exempt list. If it is something that would almost always be conforming, USDOT can make it

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a category and say that it is unless certain conditions apply. Thus far this has not been done and there is no indication that USDOT plans on doing it.

Mr. Nadler sought to clarify the questions on modeling received by RCTC. A question was received on HOV on-ramp lanes. If a couple of lanes are being added to an entry ramp and one of them is HOV, how is the entry ramp modeled? Ramp widening projects are modeled irrespective of the HOV designation. Most of these projects funnel into one lane, so if two lanes are being added - one is a HOV and one is a mixed flow - SCAG will model the improvement. The model accounts for differing lane speeds depending on whether the lane is HOV or mixed-flow.

Another question that was raised for local road and state highway widening projects is there a minimum length that does not require modeling, if so, what is it in feet/miles? Ken Lobeck, RCTC, explained that there are arterial segments that are basically gap closures where it might be two through lanes be widened to four but there is already a four lane segment. It could be a small gap closure, say 500 feet that are being widened to the four lanes, it then fills in that gap closure for safety. Mr. Nadler responded that in the Working Group's Hot Spot discussion it has been stated that capacity is actually not being added because before and after it nothing is being changed. Mike Brady stated that a conclusion on this question could not be had without the Federal Agencies in the meeting. Mr. Nadler cautioned that if this is a case where it depends on the situation, then we likely could not come up with language which makes it unambiguous.

Mr. Nadler stated that the last question is "...would an interchange improvement that includes extended right turn lanes that are long enough to function as an arterial auxiliary be modeled?" Ken Lobeck explained that this refers to, for example, a grade separation interchange such that the arterial is widened with very long right turn lane – almost a mile – that terminates into the entry ramp onto the mainline. Deng Bang Lee, SCAG, stated that if a right turn is over half the existing street segment then it is treated as a capacity enhancement, otherwise it is treated as an operation improvement.

Mr. Nadler stated that he would attempt to put together a question and answers sheet to virtually share with the Working Group and get their

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feedback. If the Working Group comes up with scenarios, it can then turn them over to the modeling section take a look at.

Mr. Nadler brought up another issue for the RTIP Guidelines by noting that SAFETEA-LU TCM substitution section allows for substitution of TCMs with EPA concurrence as opposed to a formal SIP revision. However, this section is unclear as it relates to the approved procedure of adding TCMs to the South Coast Ozone SIP via the TCM “rollover” provision associated with each RTIP approval. The SAFETEA-LU section appropriately includes the term “substitution,” but also includes the term “added TCMs” in some cases. Staff is attempting to clarify whether this should or should not be interpreted as requiring EPA concurrence for adding TCMs to the South Coast Ozone SIP via RTIP approval.

4.4 Review of PM Hot Spot Interagency Review Forms

Jonathan Nadler announced that without FHWA and EPA representatives participating, it will be difficult to make a conclusion on any of the PM Hot Spot items. Nevertheless, the TCWG considered seven interagency review forms to tentatively determine whether the projects were of air quality concern and required a qualitative PM Hot Spot Analysis. The review determined the following and will be submitted to the FHWA and EPA for a virtual review, discussion, and conclusion:

*RIV011203*: Not a POAQC. Item will be tagged as a time constrained.

*ORA2670A*: Not a POAQC.

*RIV47520*: Pending further discussion because it is a freeway widening project.

*LA0D31*: Not a POAQC.

*ORA02011*: Pending further discussion. It was noted that numbers for the build and no build are the same. Item will be tagged as time constrained.

*SBD55022*: Pending further discussion. Item will be tagged as time constrained.

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*(SBD)OH1300:* Not a POAQC.

4.5     AQMP Update

Zorik Pirveysian, SCAQMD, stated the AQMP's Governing Board adopted the 2007 AQMP on June 1<sup>st</sup> and at the same time delayed action on the two Goods Movement measures proposed by SCAG and the Transportation Conformity budgets.

As approved by the SCAQMD Governing Board, the AQMP includes the SCAQMD's suggested measures for ARB adoption to cover the emission reduction shortfall for PM2.5 attainment by 2015. Initially the emission reduction shortfall for attaining the PM2.5 standard was 71 tons per day of NOx. Subsequently, the ARB revised one of their control measures for the off road construction equipment and, as a result, the AQMP lost 3 tons per day of NOx reductions making the shortfall 74 tons per day. There were high level discussions among the SCAQMD, ARB, and SCAG to resolve the PM2.5 issue. As a result, the SCAQMD enhanced the control measures for wood burning fireplaces and commercial charbroiling which will reduce PM2.5 emission by 1.4 tons per day, providing an equivalent of 11 tons per day of NOx reductions. Thus, the NOx reduction shortfall was reduced from 74 tons to 63 tons.

The SCAQMD Governing Board will address the Goods Movement measures and the conformity budgets on July 13. There are two sets of possible conformity budgets. One is based on inclusion of SCAG's Goods Movement control measures. The other is with the reductions fulfilled by additional mobile source control measures assigned to ARB (i.e., without the SCAG measures). Based on a request from SCAG, SCAQMD staff will be recommending that the Board approve the option that requires ARB to commit to the reductions necessary to demonstrate attainment of the PM2.5 standard by 2015.

On June 22nd, the ARB Governing Board held a public hearing on the State Strategy which would adopt a list of control measures for mobile sources and consumer products. ARB's proposal does not account for the 63 tons of the NOx reduction for attainment of the standard, but rather relies on a



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“weight of evidence” determination. As part of the ARB staff’s presentation to their Board, staff indicated they would commit to an additional 14 tons per day of NO<sub>x</sub>. The testimony received by the board at the hearing was overwhelmingly in support of delaying adoption and achieving greater reductions. The ARB Board decided to continue the hearing into July and directed their staff to go back and review the strategy to try to identify additional mobile source control measures.

ARB is scheduled to consider the South Coast AQMP in October, but SCAQMD recommends that ARB consider both the State Strategy and the South Coast AQMP at the same time because it makes no sense to approve a state strategy that does not take into consideration the full attainment of the standard. SCAQMD recommended that both the State Strategy and the South Coast plan be considered in September.

Jonathan Nadler clarified that the Goods Movement Control Measures that SCAG brought forward were not solely on-road measures and that when the measures are discussed vis-à-vis the emission budgets, it should be understood that we are not discussing the total 22 tons as part of the transportation conformity budgets as the budgets are strictly for on-road sources. It was also noted that EPA usually takes three months to approve the budget whether or not they approve the SIP. Often times EPA does not approve the SIP but goes ahead and approves the transportation budgets.

Mr. Nadler also clarified that the federal Clean Air Act requires that while the ozone SIPs was originally due June 2007, EPA has concluded that they could be submitted in August.

Ben Cacatian, VCAPCD, stated that they were still waiting for modeling results from ARB. There will be a conference call tomorrow and hopefully they can get a clear picture of when the modeling will be complete. In the meantime they are working on a previous draft, making minor changes in anticipation of the modeling results and are still aiming to bring it before their Board on September 11<sup>th</sup>. At this time, the attainment year is speculated to be 2017 – a Severe-15 category.

Jonathan Nadler stated that in regards to the Mojave non-attainment area, the attainment demonstration relies on the SCAQMD because of the

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transport of emissions from South Coast to that area. As the South Coast attainment strategy goes, so does Mojave. The fact that South Coast has been pushed back means that Mojave's has been pushed back similarly. Mojave has not put a plan out yet, but the discussions are that they will be bumping up with an attainment date possibly out to 2021.

**5.0    CHAIR'S REPORT**

No new items to report.

**6.0    INFORMATION SHARING**

TCWG members asked that EPA update the TCWG on relevant conformity and air quality issues at next month's meeting.

**7.0    ADJOURNMENT**

Lori Huddleston, MTA, adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

**The next Transportation Conformity Working Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.**